

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 00259 171206Z

50 L

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-10 EB-11 INR-10 L-03 DRC-01

RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /069 W

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O R 171150Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5924

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0259

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, ETRN, SA

SUBJ: PROTEST FROM BOEING

REF: A. STATE 7517; B. BEIRUT 14344; C. JIDDA A-111

1. NO MEMBER OF THIS EMBASSY EVER MADE ANY STATEMENT TO SAG ADVOCATING PURCHASE OF A PARTICULAR TYPE OF WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT. WE ARE SURPRISED (AND A LITTLE PUZZLED SINCE CROWN PRINCE KHALID IS NOT RPT NOT AT ALL INVOLVED IN SUCH MATTERS) BOEING'S SAUDI AGENT COULD NOT HAVE COME UP WITH BETTER ALIBI FOR A POSSIBLE LOSS OF SALES OPPORTUNITY.

2. IN EARLY DECEMBER WE LEARNED OF LETTER OF INTENT ISSUED BY SAUDI AIRLINES TO LOCKHEED FOR POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF TWO L-1011 JETS. AT ROUGHLY SAME TIME, REGIONAL CIVIL AIR ATTACHE RECEIVED SIMILAR WORD FROM LOCKHEED (REPORTED UNDER REF. B). ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE HAD AT THAT TIME WAS THAT SAG WAS NOT YET FIRM ON SUBJECT OF PURCHASING WIDE-BODIED AIRCRAFT AND THAT RELATED TWA ROUTE STUDY HAD NOT EVEN BEGUN. (FYI: WE HAVE LEARNED SINCE THAT THERE WAS DIRECT CONNECTION DEMANDED BY LOCKHEED BETWEEN EARLIER DELIVERY SCHEDULE TO MEET CRITICAL NEED FOR C-130'S -- REF C -- AND THE PURCHASE OF TWO DELTA JETS ON ASSEMBLY LINE FOR SAUDIA.)

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3. LOCKHEED HAS BEEN BACK IN THE COUNTRY NEGOTIATING BUT SO FAR NO FIRM CONTRACT FOR THE DELTA JETS NOW ON THE PRODUCTION LINE HAS BEEN SIGNED. THE TWA STUDY MENTIONED ABOVE, MOREOVER, IS NOT DUE FOR COMPLETION FOR SOME WEEKS. WE HAVE ALSO LEARNED THAT PRINCE SULTAN, WHO IS OF COURSE LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR AIRCRAFT PURCHASE DECISIONS HAS ALSO RECENTLY SUGGESTED THAT SAUDIA TAKE A LOOK AT THE DC-10. THE SAG DECISION TO PURCHASE LOCKHEED THEREFORE DOES NOT APPEAR IRREVOCABLE BUT IN ITS SALES EFFORT TO INTRODUCE 747'S BOEING MIGHT FIND ITSELF UP AGAINST SAG NEED FOR LOCKHEED EQUIPMENT IN DEFENSE AREA. THERE ARE PLANS BY SAUDIA TO BUY MORE 737-TYPE AIRCRAFT (REF B).
AKINS

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